



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of California*

501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, California 95814

916/554-2700
Fax 916/554-2900

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**ADDITIONAL DEFENDANT INDICTED, FORFEITURE OF MORE PROPERTY
SOUGHT IN CASE INVOLVING SCHEME TO SELL VISAS**

SACRAMENTO--McGregor W. Scott, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California, and Christopher A. Wray, Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, announced today that a federal grand jury in Sacramento returned a superseding indictment in a pending case charging nine persons, including two former State Department employees, in connection with an alleged corrupt scheme to sell visas to enter the United States that operated out of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka. The superseding indictment charged an additional defendant, RAMESH KUMAR JAISINGH, 57, of Fairfax, Virginia, with conspiring to defraud the United States and to bribe public officials and to commit visa fraud, and sought the forfeiture of additional assets of the defendants.

According to the superseding indictment, JAISINGH paid tens of thousands of dollars in bribes to defendants ACEY R. JOHNSON, 32, who was until recently a Consular Associate employed in the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka; his spouse LONG N. LEE, 51, a State Department Foreign Service Officer and career State Department employee; and to LEE's adult daughters. An arrest warrant was issued for JAISINGH, who is believed to have fled the country.

In addition to defendants JOHNSON, LEE, and JAISINGH, the other defendants charged in the superseding indictment are VINESH PRASAD, 33; MINESH PRASAD, 28; and NARINDERJIT SINGH BHULLAR, 40, all of Sacramento; PHUONG-HIEN LAM TRINH, 35, of Torrance, California; and DAVINDER SINGH BHULLAR, 44, who is believed to be in India. The substantive criminal charges alleged against those defendants are unchanged from the previous indictment.

Two defendants have previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States, to bribe public officials and to commit visa fraud. RAJWANT S. VIRK, 46, of Herndon, Virginia, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court on June 3, 2003, and RACHHPAL SINGH, 32, formerly of Union City, and now of Newark, California, pleaded guilty on September 12, 2003. Both defendants are now cooperating with the government's investigation. They were not charged in the superseding indictment.

The superseding indictment also added allegations seeking the forfeiture to the government of additional property of the defendants. The new items as to which the government will seek forfeiture include a home owned by defendants JOHNSON and LEE in Fairfax, Virginia, jewelry belonging to defendant LEE, and over \$60,000 in cash and savings bonds seized from the homes of defendants NARINDERJIT SINGH BHULLAR, and PHUONG-HIEN LAM TRINH. In total, the superseding indictment now seeks the forfeiture of three residences owned by defendants JOHNSON and LEE located in Oregon, Colorado and Virginia; of over \$200,000 in cash seized at various defendants' homes and bank boxes during searches executed on April 29, 2003; and over \$300,000 in cash seized in various bank accounts controlled by the defendants.

The case is being prosecuted in U.S. District Court in Sacramento by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin B. Wagner and S. Robert Tice-Raskin of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Trial Attorney Noah D. Bookbinder of the Public Integrity Section, headed by Noel L. Hillman, Chief. The next appearance in the case is scheduled for November 14, 2003, before U.S. District Court Judge Garland E. Burrell in Sacramento. The case is the product of an extensive investigation conducted by the Diplomatic Security Service of the U.S. Department of State, and by agents with the FBI and several other state and federal agencies associated with the Joint Terrorism Task Force for the Eastern District of California, including the California Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Bureau of Immigration Control and Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security. Sri Lankan law enforcement authorities also provided assistance in the investigation.

The United States Attorney's Office noted that the charges in the superseding indictment are only accusations, and that the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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